

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3758

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L CASABLANCA 0834

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR SS SP MO

SUBJ: SAHARA MARCH MISCELLANY

1. REPORTS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES AND A NIGHTTIME VISIT TO THE CASABLANCA STAGING AREA SUGGEST THAT, IN SPITE OF SOME DIFFICULTIES, THE SAHARA MARCH IS REMARKABLY WELL ORGANIZED AND HAS DEVELOPED GREAT MOMENTUM. WHILE CASABLANCA IS PROBABLY SUPERIOR IN RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT TO MOST PROVINCES, ITS HANDLING OF 35 THOUSAND MARCHERS HAS BEEN IMPRESSIVE AND THE SPIRIT OF THE MARCHERS IS CALM AND DISCIPLINED BUT VERY DETERMINED.

2. CASA GOVERNMENT ON OCT 26 RECEIVED FIRST CONTINGENT OF VOLUNTEERS INTO TENT CITY BUILT IN THE PRECEEDING 5 DAYS, LAID OUT ON NEAT GRID WITH AMPLE WATER SYSTEM, ELECTRIC SUPPLY AND STREET LIGHTING, 4 LARGE KITCHEN TENETS, LATRINES, AND THE APPEARANCE OF A WELL-RUN RECRUIT CAMP. I SAW IT AT 9PM, WITH 25 THOUSAND VOLUNTEERS IN PLACE. AREA WAS CLEAN AND WELL-POLICED, KITCHEN TENTS WELL SUPPLIED WITH EQUIPMENT AND ALREADY CLEANED UP FROM SUPPER. VANS BRINGING IN BREAKFAST BREAD, TANKERS BRINGING FUEL FOR TRUCKS, AND MOST OF VOLUNTEERS TUCKED INTO THEIR TENTS FOR THE NIGHT. NO MILITARY IN SIGHT AND THE POLICE, WHILE IN CONTROL, ARE NOT OBTRUSIVE. DISCIPLINE IS IMPRESSIVE IN CAMP.

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3. LAST CONTINGENT OF CASA VOLUNTEERS ENTRAIN FOR MARRAKECH

TONIGHT, ETA TARFAYA NOT BEFORE TUESDAY, NOV 4. EACH GIVEN MESS KIT, WATER BOTTLE, BLANKETS ETC. THIS, PLUS MANY OTHER DETAILS, SHOW REMARKABLY CAREFUL PLANNING AND EFFICIENT FOLLOW THROUGH.

4. ALTHOUGH SOME COMPLAINTS OF FOOD SHORTAGE, MANY STORIES OF PRESSURE ON FIRMS TO MAKE DONATIONS IN CASH AND KIND, ETC., MORALE AND ENTHUSIASM REMAIN HIGH. NO DOUBT THAT VOLUNTEERS ARE IN HIGH SPIRITS; MANY PROFESS DETERMINATION TO CROSS BORDER AS SYMBOLIC ACT WHATEVER OUTCOME OF PRESENT NEGOTS. WE HEAR REPEATEDLY THAT VOLUNTEERS WILL HAVE RIGHTS OF "ANCIENS COMBATTANTS" INCLUDING EMPLOYMENT PRIORITY AND THERE IS WIDE-SPREAD NOTION THEY WILL HAVE PREFERENTIAL RIGHTS TO JOBS, LAND, ETC. WHEN SAHARA OPENS UP--A KIND OF HOMESTEADER'S CLAIM* DISRUPTION OF CASA ECONOMIC LIFE BY HEAVY DRAIN ON SUPPLIES, TRANSPORT, ETC., SURPRISINGLY SLIGHT SO FAR. ALL THE EVIDENCE HERE IS THAT THIS MARCH HAS GREAT AND GROWING MOMENTUM, PATRIOTIC FERVOR IS RAMPANT, AND LOGISTICS ARE BEING HANDLED WITH COMPETENCE AND EVERY INDICATION OF ABILITY TO SUSTAIN THE PROJECT.

5. CASA CONTINGENT HEADED BY ARMY COLONEL AND SOME OTHER MILITARY ARE SUPPOSEDLY AMONG SUB-MANAGERS, THOUGH THESE ALLEGEDLY MOSTLY CIVILIAN. IF THERE IS A COVERT PARAMILITARY CONTINGENT CONTAINED WITHIN THE GROUP, IT IS WELL HIDDEN.
BRUBECK

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